

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 MEXICO 02301 210231Z

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ACTION COME-00

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R 210130Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY MEXICO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3146

C O N F I D E N T I A L MEXICO 2301

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV TGEN MX

SUBJECT: PROJECT STORMFURY

REF STATE 23692,

1. ON FEB 10 AND 11 NOAA ASSOCIATE ADMINISTRATOR EPSTEIN, DR. LASEUR AND MR. WILLIAMS BRIEFED EMBASSY SCIENCE, POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS OFFICERS ON STORMFURY, AND DISCUSSIONS HELD ON PLAN FOR APPROACHING GOM.

2. NOAA REPS WERE ADVISED THAT POLITICAL CLIMATE, ESPECIALLY THIS ELECTION YEAR IN MEXICO, REQUIRES THAT CAREFUL GROUNDWORK BE LAID BEFORE GOM APPROVAL SOUGHT FOR A HURRICANE SEEDING PROGRAM, ALBEIT IN MEXICAN INTEREST. LAST YEAR SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HERE GAVE WIDE CIRCULATION TO ANTI-AMERICAN CAMPAIGN TO BLAME DAMAGE CAUSED BY HURRICANE FIFI IN 1974 ON U.S. SEEDING PROGRAM EVEN THOUGH IT WAS KNOWN TO THEM THAT THERE HAD BEEN NO HURRICANE SEEDING BY U.S. FOR SEVERAL YEARS.

3. IN VIEW OF NOAA PLANS TO STUDY AND TRACK EAST PACIFIC HURRICANES FOR COUPLE OF YEARS PRIOR TO INITIATING SEEDING PHASE OF PROGRAM, EMBASSY SUGGESTED SYSTEMATIC APPROACH TO FIRST GAIN GOM APPROVAL OF FIRST PHASE MONITORING MISSIONS IN 1976-1977 HURRICANES. OF COURSE, WE SHOULD NOT HIDE FROM THEM ULTIMATE PLANS AND OBJECTIVES STORMFURY PROJECT.

4. RECOGNIZING THAT CHANCES OF GOM SUPPORT WOULD BE  
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PAGE 02 MEXICO 02301 210231Z

SIGNIFICANTLY ENAHNCED IF THIS WERE JOINT US-MEXICAN

PROJECT, EMBASSY RECOMMENDED TO NOAA REPS THAT MEXICAN METEOROLOGY AGENCIES, THROUGH CONACYT, BE INVITED TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PROGRAM. SUCH A JOINT PROGRAM SHOULD INCLUDE EXPERIMENTS OF INTEREST TO AND SUGGESTED BY MEXICAN SCIENTISTS.

5. IN EVENT NOAA RECEIVES NECESSARY USG APPROVALS TO PROCEED, EMBASSY PREPARED INITIATE DISCUSSIONS WITH CONACYT AND WOULD PROPOSE AS FIRST STEP JOINT CONACYT/NOAA TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. WITH APPROVAL OF BOTH PARTIES, JOINT PROGRAM COULD BE MADE PART OF OVERALL US-MEXICAN SCIENTIFIC COOPERATION AND INCLUDED IN JUNE JOINT COMMISSION MEETING AGENDA.

6. IT MUST BE NOTED THAT EVEN WITH SUPPORT OF CONACYT AND OTHER MEXICAN SCIENTIFIC AGENCIES, MEXICAN FOREIGN OFFICE APPROVAL IS NOT ASSURED. USG OBVIOUSLY CANNOT PROCEED WITH PROJECT, AS NOW DESIGNED, WITHOUT GOM APPROVAL SINCE PROJECT INVOLVES OVERFLIGHTS OF MEXICO AND USE OF MEXICAN AIRPORT FACILITIES.

7. EVEN IF PROJECT REDESIGNED TO OMIT THESE FEATURES, IT MUST BE RECOGNIZED THAT TO SEEK GOM APPROVAL OF PROJECT IS TANTAMOUNT TO GIVING GOM A VETO OVER IT: IF GOM APPROVAL NOT FORTHCOMING, IT WOULD BE POLITICALLY DISASTROUS FOR USG TO PROCEED UNILATERALLY.  
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